

## **Introductions and conclusions**

In an essay it is important that the introduction engages the reader's attention. It should introduce the topic, but should not include the specific points that you are going to mention in the body of the text.

A good introductory paragraph describes the present situation and gives supporting evidence. It should refer to the statement or question you have been asked to discuss. This can often be done in the form of a question to the reader which the subsequent paragraphs should answer.

The conclusion should briefly sum up the arguments you have made, and can include your personal opinion.

The opinion you express should follow logically from the arguments you have presented.

## **Useful words and expressions**

### **Ö Expressing the main points in an argument:**

- The greatest benefit ...
- First and most importantly, ...
- One disadvantage of ...
- Another drawback to ....

### **Ö Adding supporting information to a main argument, or introducing other related arguments:**

- In addition, ...
- What is more, ...
- Not only ... that, but ...
- Another point in favour of ...

### **Ö Describing cause and effect**

- Result in / lead to
- Because of / due to

### **Ö Weighing up arguments**

- On balance,
- On the whole,
- All in all,

## **Planning what to write**

### **Brainstorm the content**

When provided with an essay title, look at it carefully and brainstorm the pros and cons of it. Then decide the main arguments on each side which are relevant to the title.

Write an introduction for the essay, following this pattern:

- ❖ Write an introductory sentence about the topic.
- ❖ Write a second sentence supporting the first one, or describing the result of it.
- ❖ Ask a question that you intend to answer in the essay

### **TIPS** for writing a discursive essay where you put both sides of an argument

- ❖ Brainstorm points for and against and decide which two or three you think are the most important.
- ❖ Use a neutral or formal style.
- ❖ Write a clear introduction, which engages the reader. You could end with a question that you are going to answer.
- ❖ Link your ideas together with varied discourse markers and linking phrases, e.g. *due to*, *this can lead to*, etc. because an essay should show the development of a logical argument; it is not just a list of random ideas and opinions.
- ❖ Make sure your conclusion is a summary of what you have previously said and refers back to what you were asked to write about. It is important that this is not just a repetition of your arguments. It is a summary of what you believe your arguments have proved.

### **PROPOSED TOPICS**

*Low cost airlines have revolutionized travel – but at what price?*

*The growth of online shopping has greatly improved life for the consumer.*

**Write an essay about one of the proposed topics in about 200 words.**

**DRAFT** your essay in four paragraphs:

- Introduction
- Arguments in favour
- Arguments against
- Conclusion, saying whether you think the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, or the other way round.

**EDIT** the essay, cutting any irrelevant information and making sure it is the right length.

**CHECK** the essay for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation and register.

**WRITE** the essay under the *Comments* section below this entry.

## **Example essays:**

***Here are some example essays. They do not follow our plan exactly, but they will give you some ideas.***

### **Example 1**

**Elena Rodríguez.**[29 November 2011 22:18](#)

**‘The growth of online shopping has greatly improved life for the consumer.’**

Many companies have seen an opportunity to increase its sales by adding a link in the net, so they can offer customers a great range of products. But are we buying in the net with all the security measures required?

Nowadays, a lot of retailers are been drawing by the ongoing tendency of Web-sales. The greatest benefit of online shopping is that it brings us closer to home a wide selection of articles in a single click without even taking off our pyjamas. In addition, this handy market avoids you to queuing at shopping malls, traffic jams and the desperate searching for car park. What is more, online shopping is a very quick form of buying all the stuff you can imagine from all over the world, which is a particular advantage for people like collectors, lovers of luxury, gourmets and so on.

**On the other hand**, nevertheless, you need a credit or debit card to buy in the net, so you are required to give personal details that can be stolen by hackers if the Website is not as reliable as it should be. Another drawback to online shopping is that some products might not be as good as the seller shows in the screen. Not only that, but you could be in deep trouble if you wanted to take the item back and be refunded.

**In my view**, online shopping has many advantages and a few disadvantages, and on the whole, I believe that if you are previously well-informed about the online shop and the ways of payment you will not run the risk of being swindled.

### **Example 2**

**Low cost airlines have revolutionized travel- but at what Price?**

Air travelling around the world has become a common issue for many people nowadays. Certainly, the reason for this might be found on the increasing number of “no frills” airlines competing and prices getting lower. Nevertheless, with the credit crunch, the escalating fuel costs, and small low cost airlines going bust, there is a lot to bear in mind when booking your flight ticket with a budget airline company. Does it really worth the hassle? Are low cost fares a good deal?

Being able to travel at an amazingly lower price, compared with the more established airlines, has clearly advanced possibilities to go abroad in certain respects. Especially if

you book in advance, are flexible with the dates and bear in mind the restrictions about luggage.

**First and most importantly**, the aircrafts of this “no frills” airlines are as safe as the larger airlines could be, as technical inspections are made regularly by the same companies, no matter the cost of the flight tickets. the control over the cabin crew gets the same inspections, other way they wouldn’t be allowed to operate.

**In addition to that**, there are definitely some bargains to be had. Moreover, low cost carriers provide excellent value and, increasing service that is comparable to the commercial airlines. You just need to know the rules, know how to avoid additional charges and hassles, and take into account the two-hours transit time.

**On the other hand**, there are some disadvantages that should be taken into consideration. The first drawback to fly with low cost airlines, is that almost all of them sell their lowest cost fares exclusively through their website. Therefore phoning them will result in a surcharge or a higher fare.

**Another downside is** that most discount carriers charge a fee for checking-in baggage, while only for hand luggage there is no extra fee to pay. As a result these companies often impose very rigid enforce excess allowances at check-in.

What is more, “no frills” airlines only offer seat sales during off-peak times of the year, such as winter. **On the contrary**, these airlines take advantage of increased demand on tickets during school holiday, to rise ticket prices.

Besides, allocation is generally not available until check-in, therefore you must arrive as early as possible at the airport. Another point against low cost carriers is that generally, food and drinks are not provided on the plane without extra-charge. And due to security policy, most fluids are banned from passing through security in airports.

Finally, and not less important, is that most budget airlines use secondary airports, which are often quite distant from the big cities. As a consequence there will be additional expenses.

**On the whole**, additional charges mount up and make cheap flights far less of a bargain than they appear to be, but still, due to the need of travelling on tight budget, the advantages are becoming more prevalent.

### **Example 3**

#### **The growth of online shopping has greatly improved life for the consumer**

With the growth of the internet we can see different programs or films, we can share comments, videos or photos with our friends or family; we have the possibility to do courses, or we can make an appointment to see the doctor. But, has the growth of online shopping greatly improved life for the consumer?

Currently we can shop online clothes, books, DVDs, everything we are interested in. Most of the shops have nowadays a web page where we can buy different products, and we can also buy items of second hand which are cheaper. The greatest benefit of the online shops

is that it allows us to buy whenever we want because they are opened 24 hours a day, and we can find products that are not available in our city or country. Another point in favour of shopping online is that we can find a vast resources and products.

**On the other hand**, there are inabilities for a physical check at the items you purchasing, and it can be also problems to return or exchange what you have bought. In addition, we do not always know if the website, where we online purchase with our credit card or pay pal, is safe and secure, for that reason it is necessary to read all the conditions.

**To sum up**, although shopping online is an easy, cheap and useful way of shopping, we have to take care with the websites in which we are going to buy. On balance, I believe that shopping online is a good way to buy, particularly when you need something that is difficult to find where you live, but if you have the opportunity to buy it in the shop, I reckon it could be better because you can watch or try on the things you want to buy.

Mónica Corrales Marbán

Taken from:<http://stopandlearnenglish.blogspot.com.es/2011/11/discursive-essays-balanced-argument.html>